

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/649,732

Amendment filed July 7, 2008

Reply to OA dated April 10, 2008

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 12-21 and 23-31 without prejudice or disclaimer. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-21 (Canceled).

Claim 22 (Previously presented): A method of producing a microporous polyolefin membrane, comprising the steps of extruding a solution composed of 10 to 50 weight % of (A) a polyolefin having a weight-average molecular weight of 5×10^5 or more or (B) a composition containing this polyolefin and 50 to 90 weight % of a solvent, into a gel-like formed article and removing the solvent therefrom, wherein a treatment step with a hot solvent is performed on the gel-like formed article, and

wherein the average pore size (a) in the area from the surface to a depth of $d/16$ (d: thickness of said membrane) is 0.05 to 50 μm , and the average pore size (b) in the other area is 0.01 to 30 μm , where the relationship $(b) < (a)$ holds.

Claims 23-32 (Canceled).

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Claim 33 (Previously Presented): The method of producing a microporous polyolefin membrane according to Claim 22, wherein the average pore size (a) in the area from the surface to a depth of $d/16$ (d: thickness of said membrane) is 1 to 30 μm , and the average pore size (b) in the other area is 0.03 to 2 μm .